

IN THE CLAIMS

1-46 (cancelled)

47. (previously presented) A towing member configured to be joined to a piece of baggage, the towing member comprising:

a non-extendable portion configured to be joined to a piece of baggage;

an arm having a proximal end, a distal end and an axial length therebetween and defining a center axis of the arm, the arm operatively connected to the non-extendable portion at the proximal end, the arm being movable between extended and retracted positions relative to the non-extendable portion such that the distal end is a closer distance measured along the center axis of the arm to the piece of baggage when the arm is in the retracted position than when the arm is in the extended position, the axial length of the arm being curved outwardly away from the piece of baggage when in the extended position so that the distal end is laterally spaced a further distance measured from a center axis of the piece of baggage than the proximal end;

a towing handle pivotally connected to the distal end of the arm, the towing handle configured to pivot about the center axis at the distal end of the arm and otherwise unable to move relative to the distal end; and

a locking mechanism located proximate the handle and the distal end of the arm, the locking mechanism being selectively moveable between a locked position and an unlocked position, wherein the locking mechanism prevents pivoting of the towing handle about the center axis when in the locked position and permits pivoting of the towing handle about the center axis when in the unlocked position.

48. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the arm is received within the non-extendable portion when in the retracted position, the arm moving along a curved telescoping path between the retracted position and the extended position, the distal end of the arm being positioned forward of the baggage and not positioned over the baggage when the arm is in the extended position.

49. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the arm includes first and second curved portions, the first curved portion sliding into, and out of, the second curved portion along a curved telescoping path when the arm is moved between the extended and retracted positions.

50. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the arm includes first and second curved portions that both slide into, and out of, the non-extendable portion along a curved telescoping path when the arm is moved between the extended and retracted positions.

51. (currently amended) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the arm ~~includes two arms spaced apart from one another and arranged side-by-side, the two arms each~~ comprises a single-pole telescoping member extending and retracting along the curved telescoping path between extended and retracted positions.

52. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the non-extendable portion is configured to be located inside of a piece of luggage.

53. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the non-extendable portion is configured to be located inside of a backpack.

54. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 47, further comprising a release mechanism located proximate the towing handle and connected to the locking mechanism, the release mechanism being manually operated by a user to unlock the locking mechanism.

55. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the towing handle has a hand grip portion containing a release button facing upward from the towing handle.

56. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the arm has one of an elliptical, tubular and oval cross-section.

57. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the towing handle is T-shaped and has a stem portion extending from a cross-bar, the locking mechanism being joined to the stem portion.

58. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the locking mechanism includes locking protrusions that form a channel there between and a locking member that is releasably fit within the channel to prevent and permit pivotal motion between the arm and the towing handle.

59. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the arm is uniformly curved along a complete length thereof from the proximal end to the distal end.

60. (currently amended) The towing member of claim 47, further comprising a rigid base and at least one wheel coupled to the bottom portion.

61. (previously presented) A towing member configured to be joined to a piece of baggage, the towing member comprising:

a non-extendable portion configured to be joined to a piece of baggage;

an arm having a distal end and a proximal end with an axial length extending therebetween and defining a center axis of the arm, the arm operatively connected to the non-extendable portion at the proximal end, the arm being movable between extended and retracted positions such that the distal end is closer to the piece of baggage when the arm is in the retracted position than when the arm is in the extended position;

a towing handle pivotally connected to the distal end of the arm, the towing handle fixedly mounted to the distal end along an axis extending generally perpendicular to the center axis while being configured to pivot generally about the center axis at the distal end of the arm, the handle comprising a locking protrusion;

a locking mechanism located proximate the handle and the distal end of the arm, the locking mechanism being selectively moveable between a locked position and an unlocked position,

wherein the locking mechanism prevents pivoting of the towing handle about the center axis when in the locked position and permits pivoting of the towing handle about the center axis when in the unlocked position,

wherein the towing handle may be oriented in different angular orientations relative to the center axis when the locking mechanism is in the locked position,

wherein the locking mechanism comprises a movable locking element and a connector mounted stationary to the distal end, the locking element having a body defining a slot therethrough and the connector including a locking post extending through the slot in a direction generally perpendicular to the center axis, the movable locking element being movable toward and away from the locking protrusion to lock and unlock the mechanism; and

a release mechanism located proximate the handle, the release mechanism being configured and adapted to move the locking mechanism from the locked position to the unlocked position when the release mechanism is operated by a user.

62. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 61, wherein the arm includes a curved portion that is received within the non-extendable portion when in the retracted position, the curved portion moving along a curved telescoping path between a retracted position and an extended position, the distal end of the arm being positioned forward of the baggage and not positioned over the baggage when the arm is in the extended position.

63. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 61, wherein the arm includes first and second curved portions, the first curved portion sliding into, and out of, the second curved portion along a curved telescoping path when the arm is moved between the extended and retracted positions.

64. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 61, wherein the arm includes first and second curved portions that both slide into, and out of, the non-extendable portion along a curved telescoping path when the arm is moved between the extended and retracted positions.

65. (currently amended) The towing member of claim 61, wherein the arm ~~includes two arms spaced apart from one another and arranged side-by-side, the two arms each~~ comprises a single-pole telescoping member extending and retracting along the curved telescoping path between extended and retracted positions.

66. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 61, wherein the non-extendable portion is configured to be located inside of a piece of luggage.

67. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 61, wherein the non-extendable portion is configured to be located inside of a backpack.

68. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 61, wherein the towing handle has a hand grip portion and the release mechanism includes a release button provided on the hand grip facing upward from the towing handle.

69. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 61, wherein the arm has one of an elliptical, tubular and oval cross-section.

70. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 61, wherein the towing handle is T-shaped and has a stem portion extending from a cross-bar, the locking mechanism being joined to the stem portion.

71. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 61, wherein the locking protrusion defines intersecting channels and the locking member is releasably fit within the channels to lockably retain the towing handle in different towing positions pivoted about the center axis.

72. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 61, wherein the arm is uniformly curved along a complete length thereof from the proximal end to the distal end.

73. (currently amended) The towing member of claim 61, further comprising a rigid base and at least one wheel coupled to the base.

74. (previously presented) A towing member configured to be joined to a base of a piece of baggage, the towing member comprising:

a towing handle;

a non-extendable portion; and

at least one curved arm slideably received within the non-extendable portion and movable relative to the non-extendable portion along a curved telescoping path between a retracted position and an extended position, the at least one arm having a distal end with the towing handle provided thereon, the towing handle being positioned forward of the base and not positioned over the base when the at least one arm is in the extended position, the at least one arm having a curved portion that is retracted into the non-extendable portion when in the retracted position; and

the towing handle being connected to a distal end of the curved arm and rotatable about a center axis of the arm, and the towing handle being positionable in a first locked position when the curved arm is in the retracted position and a second locked position different from the first locked position when the curved arm is in the extended position, wherein the second locked position is angularly displaced from the first locked position about the center axis of the arm and wherein the handle is prevented from rotating about the center axis of the arm in each of the first and second locked positions.

75. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 74, wherein the arm includes first and second curved portions, the first curved portion sliding into, and out of, the second curved portion along a curved telescoping path when the arm is moved between the extended and retracted positions.

76. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 74, wherein the arm includes first and second curved portions that both slide into, and out of, the non-extendable portion along a curved telescoping path when the arm is moved between the extended and retracted positions.

77. (currently amended) The towing member of claim 74, wherein the at least one arm ~~includes two arms spaced apart from one another and arranged side-by-side, the two arms each comprises a single-pole telescoping member~~ extending and retracting along the curved telescoping path between extended and retracted positions.

78. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 74, wherein the non-extendable portion is configured to be located inside of a piece of luggage.

79. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 74, wherein the non-extendable portion is configured to be located inside of a backpack.

80. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 74, wherein the towing handle comprises a handle grip and the towing member further comprising a locking member located proximate the distal end of the arm, the locking-member comprising opposing parallel surfaces and being selectively moveable between a locked position located at a first distance from the distal end and an unlocked position located at a second distance from the distal end, wherein the locking member obstructs pivoting of the towing handle relative to the distal end of the arm when in the locked position and permits pivoting of the towing handle relative to the distal end of the arm when in the unlocked position.

81. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 74, wherein the arm has one of an elliptical, tubular and oval cross-section.

82. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 74, wherein the towing handle is T-shaped and has a stem portion extending from a cross-bar, the locking mechanism being joined to the stem portion.

83. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 74, wherein the arm is uniformly curved along a complete length thereof from the proximal end to the distal end.

84. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 74, wherein the towing handle is pivotal for 360 degrees of rotation about and relative to the distal end of the arm when unlocked.

85. (previously presented) The towing member of claim 74, wherein the towing handle is restrained from movement along an axis extending perpendicular to the center axis.

86. (currently amended) The towing member of claim 47, wherein the arm portion is ~~one of~~ comprises a single pole telescoping member ~~and spaced apart telescoping members~~.

87. (currently amended) The towing member of claim 61 wherein the arm portion is ~~one of~~ comprises a single pole telescoping member ~~and spaced apart telescoping members~~.